

What is claimed:

A paint roller, comprising:

- (a) a handle having a first end and a second end;
- (b) a shaft having a first end and a second end;
- (c) a functional element secured to the second end of the shaft;
- (d) a flexure joint interposed between and connecting the second end of the handle and the first end of the shaft, which includes:
  - (i) a spherical member,
  - (ii) a receiving member configured and arranged to maintain and selectively engage the spherical member, and
  - (iii) a connector in communication with the receiving member for releasably locking the spherical member in position as between at least a first locked position and a second locked position relative to the receiving member, and
- (e) whereby repositioning of the spherical member as between the first and second locked positions is effective for repositioning the shaft relative to the handle as between a first locked position and a second locked position.

2. The paint roller of claim 1, wherein the functional element is a tube-receiving frame rotatably secured to the second end of the shaft
3. The paint roller of claim 1, wherein the spherical member is connected to the first end of the shaft and the receiving member is connected to the second end of the handle.
4. The paint roller of claim 1, wherein the spherical member is connected to the second end of the handle and the receiving member is connected to the first end of the shaft.
5. The paint roller of claim 1, wherein the connector is hand operable for locking and releasing the spherical member.

6. The paint roller of claim 1, wherein (i) the spherical member has a radius, (ii) the receiving member includes first and second transversely spaced opposing arms, (iii) the first arm has an inner surface facing the second arm and defines a depression having a circular periphery in the inner surface, (iv) the depression has a radius which is smaller than the radius of the spherical member, and (v) the spherical member is sandwiched between the first and second arms and centered within the depression through the first flange.
7. The paint roller of claim 1, wherein (i) the spherical member has a radius, (ii) the receiving member includes first and second transversely spaced opposing arms, (iii) the first arm has an inner surface facing the second arm and defines a depression having a circular periphery in the inner surface of the first arm, (iv) the second arm has an inner surface facing the first arm and defines a depression having a circular periphery in the inner surface of the second arm, (v) the depression in the first arm and the depression in the second arm are axially aligned, (vi) the depressions have radii which are smaller than the radius of the spherical member, and (vii) the spherical member is sandwiched between the first and second arms and centered within both depressions.
8. The paint roller of claim 6, wherein the depression in the first arm is an aperture extending completely through the first arm.
9. The paint roller of claim 7, wherein the depression in the first arm is an aperture extending completely through the first arm and the depression in the second arm is an aperture extending completely through the second arm.
10. The paint roller of claim 6, wherein the connector has a proximal end and a distal end with the distal ends slidingly extending through a bore in one arm and threadably engaging the other arm with the proximal end configured and arranged to engage the one arm so as to prevent passage of the connector completely through the bore, whereby tightening of the connector pulls the arms together so as to lock the spherical member into position relative to the receiving member and loosening of the connector allows the

arms to separate so as to permit repositioning of the spherical member relative to the receiving member.

11. The paint roller of claim 7, wherein the connector has a proximal end and a distal end with the distal ends slidably extending through a bore in one arm and threadably engaging the other arm with the proximal end configured and arranged to engage the one arm so as to prevent passage of the connector completely through the bore, whereby tightening of the connector pulls the arms together so as to lock the spherical member into position relative to the receiving member and loosening of the connector allows the arms to separate so as to permit repositioning of the spherical member relative to the receiving member.

12. A paint roller, comprising:

- (a) a handle having a first end and a second end;
- (b) a shaft having a first end and a second end;
- (c) a functional element secured to the second end of the shaft; and
- (d) attachment means interposed between and connecting the second end of the handle and the first end of the shaft which is configured to selectively position the tube-receiving frame relative to the handle by providing a disengaged condition permitting repositioning of the shaft relative to the handle in at least two degrees of freedom, and an engaged condition preventing repositioning of the shaft relative to the handle, wherein the engaged condition can be achieved with the shaft in at least two different positions relative to the handle.

13. The paint roller of claim 12, wherein the functional element is a tube-receiving frame rotatably secured to the second end of the shaft

14. The paint roller of claim 12 wherein (i) the handle has a longitudinal axis extending through the first and second ends of the handle, and (ii) shaft can be angularly repositioned relative to the axis of the handle through at least 60° in at least one direction.

15. The paint roller of claim 12 wherein (i) the handle has a longitudinal axis extending through the first and second ends of the handle, and (ii) shaft can be angularly repositioned relative to the axis of the handle through at least 120° in at least one direction.
16. The paint roller of claim 12, wherein the attachment means is hand operable for switching between the engaged and disengaged conditions.
17. The paint roller of claim 12, wherein (i) the spherical member is radially rotatably connected to the first end of the shaft, (ii) the receiving member is connected to the second end of the handle, and (iii) the paint roller further comprises a locking mechanism effective in a disengaged condition for permitting rotational repositioning of the shaft relative to the spherical member and effective in an engaged position for locking the shaft in a rotated position relative to the spherical member as between at least a first locked rotated position and a second locked rotated position.
18. The paint roller of claim 12, wherein (i) the handle defines a longitudinal axis extending through the first and second ends of the handle, (ii) the spherical member is connected to the first end of the shaft, (iii) the receiving member is rotatably connected to the second end of the handle with rotation occurring about the longitudinal axis defined by the handle, and (iv) the paint roller further comprises a locking mechanism effective in a disengaged condition for permitting rotational repositioning of the handle relative to the receiving member and effective in an engaged position for locking the handle in a rotated position relative to the receiving member as between at least a first locked rotated position and a second locked rotated position.
19. The paint roller of claim 12, wherein (i) the spherical member is radially rotatably connected to the second end of the handle, (ii) the receiving member is connected to the first end of the shaft, and (iii) the paint roller further comprises a locking mechanism effective in a disengaged condition for permitting rotational repositioning of the handle relative to the spherical member and effective in an engaged position for locking the

handle in a rotated position relative to the spherical member as between at least a first locked rotated position and a second locked rotated position

20. The paint roller of claim 12, wherein (i) the first end portion of the shaft defines a longitudinal axis, (ii) the spherical member is connected to the second end of the handle, (iii) the receiving member is rotatably connected to the first end of the shaft with rotation occurring about the longitudinal axis defined by the first end portion of the shaft, and (iv) the paint roller further comprises a locking mechanism effective in a disengaged condition for permitting rotational repositioning of the shaft relative to the receiving member and effective in an engaged position for locking the shaft in a rotated position relative to the receiving member as between at least a first locked rotated position and a second locked rotated position.
21. The paint roller of claim 17, wherein the shaft is rotatable 360° relative to the spherical member.
22. The paint roller of claim 17, wherein the locking mechanism is hand operable for switching between the engaged and disengaged conditions.
23. The paint roller of claim 18, wherein the handle is rotatable 360° relative to the receiving member.
24. The paint roller of claim 18, wherein the locking mechanism is hand operable for switching between the engaged and disengaged conditions.
25. The paint roller of claim 19, wherein the handle is rotatable 360° relative to the spherical member.
26. The paint roller of claim 19, wherein the locking mechanism is hand operable for switching between the engaged and disengaged conditions.

0919534-03101

27. The paint roller of claim 20, wherein the shaft is rotatable 360° relative to the receiving member.
28. The paint roller of claim 20, wherein the locking mechanism is hand operable for switching between the engaged and disengaged conditions.

FOIEUO:HE56T660